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Security Council

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14 February 1991

ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH MEETING (PART II) (CLOSED)

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 14 February 1991, at 4.00 p.m.

President:	Mr. MUMBENGEGWI	(Zimbabwe)
Members:	Austria	Mr. HOHENFELLNER
	Belgium	Mr. NOTERDAEME
	China	Mr. LI Daoyu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. ANET
	Cuba	Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA
	Ecuador	Mr. AYALA LASSO
	France	Mr. BLANC
	India	Mr. GHAREKHAN
	Romania	Mr. MUNTEANU
	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. VORONTSOV
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David HANNAY
	United States of America	Mr. PICKERING
	Yemen	Mr. AL-ASHTAL
	Zaire	Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the Security Council.

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READEX FICHE

The meeting was resumed at 4 p.m., Thursday, 14 February 1991.*

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darusallam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Comoros, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda.

In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Anbari (Iraq) and Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) took places at the Council table; Mr. Vazquez (Argentina), Mr. Bamsey (Australia), Mr. I. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil), Mr. Suyoi (Brunei Darusallam), Mr. Kostov (Bulgaria), Mr. Kirsch (Canada), Mr. Somavia (Chile), Mr. Cepeda (Colombia), Mr. Moumin (Comoros), Mr. Eftychiou (Cyprus), Mr. Kukan (Czechoslovakia), Mr. Mortensen (Denmark), Mr. Moussa (Egypt), Mr. Törnudd (Finland), Mr. Rantzau (Germany), Mr. Exarchos (Greece), Mr. Flores

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* The agenda for this resumed, closed meeting is contained in document S/Agenda/2977 (Part II)/Rev.1.

Mr. Törnudd (Finland), Mr. Rantzau (Germany), Mr. Exarchos (Greece), Mr. Flores Bermudez (Honduras), Mr. Budai (Hungary), Mr. Gislason (Iceland), Mr. Sutresna (Indonesia), Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Hayes (Ireland), Mr. Aridor (Israel), Mr. Traxler (Italy), Mr. Hatano (Japan), Mrs. Fritsche (Liechtenstein), Mr. Feyder (Luxembourg), Mr. Razali (Malaysia), Mr. Montaño (Mexico), Mr. Min (Myanmar), Count De Marchant et d'Ansembourg (Netherlands), Mr. O'Brien (New Zealand), Mr. Huslid (Norway), Mr. Marker (Pakistan), Mr. Luna (Peru), Mr. Mendez (Philippines), Mr. Pawlak (Poland), Mr. Da Costa Pereira (Portugal), Mr. Al-Ni'mah (Qatar), Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), Mrs. Diallo (Senegal), Ms. Chan (Singapore), Mr. Shearar (South Africa), Mr. Villar (Spain), Mr. Lagu (Sudan), Mr. Eliasson (Sweden), Mr. El-Fattal (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Suvarnatemee (Thailand), Mr. Aksin (Turkey), Mr. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Al-Shaali (United Arab Emirates), Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay), Mr. Arria (Venezuela) and Mr. Silovic (Yugoslavia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 13 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

"In my capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group at the United Nations, I have the pleasure to request that His Excellency Ambassador A. Engin Ansay, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, be invited to participate in the Security Council's meeting on the item entitled 'The situation between Iraq and Kuwait' in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure."

That letter has been published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/22220. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to His Excellency Ambassador A. Engin Ansay.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

(The President)

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 13 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

"On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request that Mrs. Arlette Laurent, Chargé d'affaires of the delegation of the Commission of the European Economic Community, be allowed to participate in the Council's discussion of the item presently on its agenda in accordance with rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure."

The letter has been published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/22221.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mrs. Arlette Laurent.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in response to requests contained in a letter dated 23 January 1991 from the representatives of Algeria, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/22135; a letter dated 24 January 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/22144; and a letter dated 28 January 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/22157.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/22138, letter dated 23 January 1991 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, and document S/22147, letter dated 25 January 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the

(The President)

United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, supporting the requests for the meeting.

I should also like to draw the attention of members of the Council to the following documents: S/22136, S/22137, S/22139, S/22140, S/22141, S/22142, S/22143, S/22145, S/22146, S/22149, S/22150, S/22151, S/22152, S/22153, S/22154, S/22155, S/22156, S/22158, S/22159, S/22160/Rev.1, S/22162, S/22163, S/22164, S/22165, S/22166, S/22168, S/22169, S/22172, S/22173, S/22174, S/22178, S/22179, S/22180, S/22181, S/22182, S/22183, S/22185, S/22186, S/22187, S/22188, S/22189, S/22190, S/22191, S/22192, S/22194, S/22195, S/22197, S/22199, S/22200, S/22201, S/22203, S/22204, S/22205, S/22206, S/22210, S/22211, S/22213, S/22214, S/22215, S/22216, S/22217, S/22218, S/22219, and S/22222.

The first speaker is the representative of Kuwait, on whom I now call.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the delegation of the State of Kuwait and on my own behalf, may I express to you, Sir, a colleague and a friend, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Since you joined this world community as a representative of your friendly country, Zimbabwe, we have come to know you as a wise and experienced diplomat with skills that qualify you to conduct the Council's work in pursuit of success and in the service of peace.

I take pleasure in commending with gratitude the remarkable role of your predecessor, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Permanent Representative of Zaire, for his exemplary conduct of the Council's work during the past month.

This is the first time I have spoken in the Council with its new membership. Therefore, may I congratulate Austria, Belgium, Ecuador, India and Zimbabwe on their accession to membership of the Council at this vital period in the history of the United Nations. I am confident that they will give a valuable input to our work for peace based on justice. May I also thank Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia,

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Finland and Malaysia for their service in the Council on behalf of peace and the objectives of the United Nations.

The Security Council is meeting upon a request from some sister Arab States to discuss the recent developments in the Arab Gulf conflict. It may be just and fair to make it clear immediately that in authorizing the multinational forces that are cooperating with my country, Kuwait, to use all possible means to force Iraq's compliance with its relevant resolutions, the Council was merely resorting to the only means left to it by the intransigent Iraqi régime, which has rebuffed all attempts, all efforts and all initiatives to persuade it in a calm and friendly manner to spare Iraq and its people, and indeed the region, the woeful results of the use of force.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

The same logic of justice and fairness dictates that we all assert that the use of brute force or, rather, the waging of war started on 2 August last year, when legions of the treacherous and usurping Iraqi army assaulted the territory of my country, Kuwait, trampling its people underfoot, displacing its families, raping and defiling its sanctities, wreaking unprecedented havoc on its blessed soil and plundering and destroying all the enormous economic potential of a sister nation, one that has set an example in giving and in its limitless respect for peace. All these inhumane practices are continuing - indeed, escalating. The use of force against the unarmed Kuwaiti people is continuing and escalating. The United Nations General Assembly at its current session has reflected the near-unanimity of the international community in condemning these brutal practices and rejecting the killing and devastation of the Kuwaiti people when it voted in favour of our draft resolution by an overwhelming majority. That some Arab countries should have lagged behind the international consensus by not repudiating Iraq's premeditated policy of decimating the people of Kuwait is lamentable for the people of Kuwait, for the concept of justice and equality and for the bonds of religion and nationalism. It is no mere coincidence that these same Arab countries are those that are now requesting the convening of the Security Council to consider their allegation that current military operations aim at destroying Iraq.

Despite the enormity of the calamity that has befallen the State of Kuwait, we have remained keen on invoking peaceful means to solve the dispute with Iraq and giving such means the required time to work, notwithstanding the suffering this has entailed for the steadfast and heroic people of Kuwait, which continue to struggle both inside and outside the country.

From the beginning we have pursued the paths prescribed by the United Nations Charter in order to compel compliance by those countries that violate and breach its provisions. Hence the imposition of sanctions on Iraq. We were all hopeful

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

that the combination of economic sanctions and diplomatic endeavours would bring Iraq's regime back to its senses and that it would thus withdraw its invading forces from Kuwaiti territory. The goal of Kuwait, backed by the world community in its just cause, was not to starve the people of Iraq or the people of Kuwait languishing under occupation, even though Iraq had destroyed, plundered, brutalized and defiled our sanctities. Rather, our purpose was to persuade the Iraqi leadership that the only path towards sparing the region the woes of destruction and its own people from devastation is through complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate Government. But Iraq has met all these efforts and endeavours to achieve peaceful compliance with intransigence and rejection.

The world community grew impatient with such indifference and with the attempt to continue to decimate Kuwait and erase it from the map. There was universal agreement that this unprovoked and blatant aggression against and occupation of the peaceful State of Kuwait was unprecedented and constituted a situation totally upsetting the new world order and undermining its foundations. If a country were allowed to have recourse to brute military force to devour a small independent and sovereign country as the world was approaching the new horizons of the post-cold-war era and on the threshold of the twenty-first century, all mankind would be plunged into the quaqmire of the law of the jungle, anarchy and the logic of force. For that reason, the Security Council agreed to give the aggressive Iraqi regime a period of 47 days to withdraw its invading forces from the territory of Kuwait in compliance with the international will. The warning from the entire world to the Iraqi regime was made very clear in Security Council resolution 678 (1990), which provides for withdrawal and compliance, failing which the significant international coalition would have the right to use all possible means to liberate Kuwait and reverse invasion and aggression.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

The international community did not let that period of time pass in silence or without movement. That period of time was replete with initiatives and contacts by Arab and foreign leaders alike, by the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Secretary of State of the United States. Perhaps the last such attempt was the one undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations just before the 15 January deadline, in the hope that the aggressive Iraqi regime would abandon its intransigence and persistence in defying the will of the international community. However, all returned from their meetings and contacts with Iraqis without any noteworthy results, just as the Secretary-General informed the Security Council of the total failure of his mission to Baghdad.

Baghdad has been displaying arrogance, nonchalance, disregard and skepticism about the sriousness of the United Nations and the strength of the world community - indeed, the resolve of the multinational forces to implement the resolutions of the Security Council, including the resolution authorizing the use of force.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

It was only natural that the Iraqi aggression's effects on the international arena, its effects on the fabric and future of international relations - indeed, on international peace and security - necessitated a decisive move, a move that could brook no delay. It was also obvious that the new world order that was being sought by the international community was an order that could not allow such naked aggression to go unanswered, an order that had no place for a party like the Iraqi régime. Therefore, the international forces began the implementation of the Security Council resolution, and in order to minimize civilian casualties in these military operations they concentrated their bombardment on the Iraqi war machine, wherever they found it. That is the machine that provides the occupier with the means of its aggression, the means to prolong the duration of the occupation.

In these operations, the Kuwaiti armed forces had the honour of firing the first shots in the battle to liberate the blessed land of Kuwait. They succeeded in hitting their targets deep inside Kuwait, supported in that endeavour by aircraft of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain as well as by other forces participating in this honourable and legitimate battle to repulse a vicious, blatant act of aggression and liberate a usurped land. All these operations have been, and continue to be, conducted within the context of resolution 678 (1990). The fighting has not been expanded, nor is its target the destruction of Iraq. The only aim is to set Kuwait free from the machine of aggression.

We cannot fail to note here that it was the Iraqi régime that brought this devastation upon itself and upon its people, because of its insistence on aggression, its rejection of the international will, its refusal to comply with the international will, its defiance of the world community's resolutions and the sentiments of world public opinion, its violation of all laws, norms, covenants and principles.

During the very first week of the military occupation, His Highness King

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Hassan II, of Morocco issued an appeal to Iraq to accept withdrawal and thereby retain its current capabilities. The Presidents of the Soviet Union and Iran issued similar appeals. They fell on deaf ears; they were rejected. There was an insistence on destroying Iraq and its people in order to fulfil personal dreams and ambitions.

Not only did Iraq fail to state its willingness to withdraw and end its aggression against Kuwait and the steadfast, heroic Kuwaiti people: the Iraqi occupation forces have, instead, escalated their acts of brutalization of the Kuwaiti people. We now have firm, reliable information indicating that barbaric acts of execution and rape continue. The official spokesman of the Kuwaiti army in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has stated today that the Kuwaiti Resistance has witnessed the liquidation of 200 Kuwaitis in the past few days. These Kuwaitis were brutalized. Among those killed were six women whose breasts were cut off and thrown into the street.

We call on the representative of Iraq in this Chamber to indicate a willingness to allow the international press corps now in Baghdad to go to Kuwait and reveal the tragedy now unfolding there. Yesterday we saw the representative of Iraq on our television screens. He was asked: why does your Government prevent members of the international press corps from going to Kuwait? His reply was: Kuwait is a military area. Through you, Mr. President, I should like to ask these questions: In its present circumstances is not Baghdad a military area? With all the allegations about air raids being made, why is it that today the international press corps in Baghdad can send out news and pictures but the very same international press corps is prevented from going to Kuwait? Why are they prevented from talking to Kuwaiti citizens? Why are they not allowed to give us an unbiased view - even with the censorship now being imposed on the press corps? Why are they not allowed to show us the Kuwaiti people under Iraqi occupation? This is a serious challenge that I put forward.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

The Iraqi occupation forces use Kuwaiti houses as sanctuaries and Kuwaiti people as human shields. Information has reached us that Kuwaiti families are being forced to leave their homes and Iraqi soldiers are being installed in their place, with the aim of avoiding new military operations. Anti-aircraft batteries have been placed on the roofs of Kuwaiti houses. That is the way Iraq respects civilian installations. That is an example of Iraqi behaviour towards civilians. There is a concentrated Iraqi military presence in Kuwaiti residences.

The children of Kuwait inside the country have been suffering from shortages in food and medicine for six months now as a result of the steady, continuing pillaging by Iraq of our resources in such supplies. At such a time, the Iraqi invasion forces are storming and assaulting houses of Kuwaitis and other residents and seizing any food supplies they find. The citizens of Kuwait are now being threatened with the spectre of a sweeping famine.

I am sure everyone here knows of the appeals addressed to the Iraqi Government by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and by specialized agencies and humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross, in which they merely requested permission for food supplies to reach Kuwait and to be distributed under the supervision of those organizations and agencies. The Iraqi Government replied with a resounding "no", even while the Iraqi army inside Kuwait City is stealing the daily bread of our defenceless people.

The people and Government of Kuwait expect the world community in general, and those countries that speak out loudly in defence of the stubborn Iraqi régime in particular, to condemn in the strongest terms these inhuman Iraqi practices perpetrated against the Kuwaiti people - a people whose life, destiny and national resources have been subjected to systematic destruction, to constant plundering, and whose oil and industrial facilities are being held hostage to the crazed dreams of a domineering dictator.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

The mining of Kuwaiti ports and oil wells and installations and their being set on fire are vivid examples of this. The Iraqi régime did not stop at attempting to destroy Kuwait's present; indeed, its criminal acts have gone beyond that to the destruction of Kuwait's future and the entire region's economic future through its attempt to ruin our marine environment with the dumping of millions of barrels of oil into the Gulf in a reckless, random manner. It is the biggest environmental crime the world has ever known.

In persisting in the destruction of its people's resources and in causing such ruin and devastation in the entire region, the Baghdad regime has attempted to widen the conflict, to break up the Arab fold and to agitate Arab public opinion with beguiling slogans and ploys that nobody can swallow. If the Iraqi régime really wanted to liberate Palestine, why did it not send its forces there? Why send them to Kuwait? As the Council knows, when it aggressed upon Iran it also claimed it was attempting to liberate Palestine - by attacking Iran. Iran's response was that Palestine's liberation would take place to the west, not to the east. Today it seems Palestine's liberation is to take place to the south. It is not to the south.

Through this barbaric invasion the Iraqi regime has inflicted the worst possible damage on the Palestinian cause. This aggression has badly impaired Palestinian interests. It has dislocated hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who used to live in peace and safety in Kuwait - people who were financially supporting their kin and their cause. The aggression has also hurt Palestinian interests throughout the entire Gulf region and pushed their cause to the lowest possible rung on the ladder of international concerns and priorities.

From this vital Chamber I wish to address some questions to the countries requesting a cease-fire.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Does the Iraqi régime now deserve to be rewarded for its aggression, for its occupation, and for the atrocities it has perpetrated, with a cease-fire?

Should the world community back off from the crucial mission in the service of world peace and security just days after the beginning of the battle of liberation and after the Baghdad régime has rebuffed the overtures of Soviet President Gorbachev, the appeal of Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and the calls and messages from the Non-Aligned Movement, and all appeals and pleadings?

Should not these countries instead turn first to Iraq to maintain international peace and security, especially since they have found favour with its regime? Should not they direct to that regime their appeals and calls for withdrawal from occupied Kuwaiti lands so that the crisis may be resolved and so that the region may be saved from this destruction? Were not these military operations the only natural outcome of failure in all endeavours for peace in which these very countries were themselves involved more than once? Have they not seen for themselves how the Baghdad regime is unwilling to retreat from its aggression and occupation and to comply with international will?

The only conclusion a sensible mind can draw from all this is that there should be no cessation, no cease-fire whatsoever, before the complete liberation of Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate Government, because such a move would be counter-productive, a negative message from the Security Council to the Iraqi leadership, which anxiously yearns for controversy, for rift, for disunity to plague the ranks of the Security Council so that it may continue its occupation.

However, the Security Council has been and remains united and coherent in the face of such flagrant violations of all the principles of the Charter and this naked aggression against the sovereignty of a Member State of the United Nations, against a peace-loving nation that has never encroached upon anyone's rights or

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

balked in its obligations to anyone, a country that has never neglected to play its role or to fulfil its commitments towards the general common interests of our international community.

I repeat once again that these countries now calling for a cease-fire ought instead to address the Iraqi régime that initiatied the aggression, the régime that persists in the occupation and rejects the peace necessary for it to take the initiative in solving the crisis and take the first basic step to end the military occupations, which is to withdraw from Kuwait and repudiate aggression.

We find it hard to imagine, but these countries which claim that the ongoing military operations have exceeded the scope of liberating Kuwait to target and destroy Iraq, are more concerned about the Iraqi leadership and its dictator than their own peoples. If that claim were true, should not the Iraqi régime preserve the capabilities remaining in its possession, and not throw its people and their destinies into ruin for the sake of greed and personal ambition? It can do that by withdrawing from Kuwait immediately and unconditionally.

Have we not heard the statement of that régime's leader last Sunday, when he declared his complete rejection of a cease-fire, when he declared his insistence on the struggle until the last Iraqi?

By their heroic action, the international forces are for the first time in the history of the United Nations reaffirming collective security and self-defence, which the United Nations Charter intends to be a shield for nations and international stability. They are reaffirming this established reality.

A world order is now dawning. It is being fashioned by the United Nations, and all nations will bask in its sunlight free from force and free from the threat or use of it.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

Stability and security in the Gulf region after Kuwait's complete liberation, God willing, will be a factor for well-being and prosperity in the economy and security of the entire world.

We look forward to the day, very soon, when we Kuwaitis will welcome members on the liberated soil of Kuwait, while thanking the Almighty and expressing our gratitude to all those who helped us in this lofty mission.

I am at your disposal, Mr. President, if any clarifications are requested or if there are any questions.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): I will speak only briefly in connection with the statement that we have just heard, on which I would like to congratulate the representative of Kuwait, and with his final words, which sought questions in connection with his presentation and with the events with which he is so familiar in the region, and with respect to which his Government, of course, has been tragically involved.

In that regard, and in full knowledge of and in keeping with our provisional rules of procedure, I would like at this stage to avail myself of the opportunity to address to him a certain number of questions. I do so in keeping with our decision yesterday to try to do everything possible to make fruitful and productive this private meeting of the Security Council and on the basis of past meetings of this character, which have provided opportunities to explore the issues in this fashion and to reply. I hope that the representative of Kuwait will be prepared to respond now or at an appropriate time in the future. I will understand very well if he wishes to have more time in which to provide a response.

I would like to ask him if he would be prepared to describe the status of the efforts of the Government of Kuwait to reach a negotiated settlement of the border and other disputes with Iraq in the period preceding the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait of 2 August 1990.

In addition, I would like to ask whether Kuwait is prepared, in the words of operative paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 660 (1990), to begin negotiations with Iraq to resolve this dispute once Iraq has complied with the other elements contained in that resolution.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

Thirdly, I would like to know if the Government of Kuwait has received from Iraq at any time an indication of any sort that a negotiated settlement consistent with the resolutions of the Security Council is possible.

Finally, does Kuwait believe or have any reason to believe that a cease-fire would help to resolve the problem and to promote the complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces as called for in the Security Council resolutions and particularly in resolution 660 (1990)?

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia): To start with, Sir, if you would like to give the opportunity to the representative of Kuwait to answer the questions that were addressed to him, I have no objection to sitting here and waiting until he has given his answers. Otherwise, I can proceed with my statement.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): Thank you, sir, for giving me the opportunity to respond to the questions addressed to me by the representative of the United States of America.

As to his first question of whether -

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Yemen on a point of order.

Mr. AL-ASHTAL (Yemen): I am sorry that I must interrupt my colleague and friend, Ambassador Abulhasan of Kuwait. I never like to interrupt any of my colleagues, but I do so on a point of order concerning a procedural matter. My understanding is that there is a certain arrangement that was agreed upon this morning among members of the Security Council that we stick to the provisional rules of procedure.

(Mr. Al-Ashtal, Yemen)

I would like us to do exactly that. I believe that the representative of Kuwait has every right to answer the questions that were asked him by my colleague, Ambassador Pickering of the United States. I think, however, that he should do so in accordance with the list of speakers. In other words, he should inscribe his name at the end of the list in order to reply to the representative of the United States. Otherwise, without really agreeing on this format, we will be creating a certain confusion and having to hear many points of order in the middle of the meeting. I hope that the arrangement reached this morning will be followed.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the United States on a point of order.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): In connection with the point of order just raised by my friend from Yemen, I would like to point out that it is already clear that the representative of Saudi Arabia, who was next on the list of speakers, has yielded his priority to the representative of Kuwait in accordance with Rule 27 of the provisional rules of procedure, and that, normally, as we proceed through the list, when members of the Council exert their right to priority to appear on the list, they have not cleared with all the other Council members.

In fact, I inscribed my name just three hours ago in the second place on the list without seeking the permission of the United Kingdom, China, Romania, Austria, Ecuador, Belgium, the Soviet Union or India. In the absence of any objection on the part of the other members, I believe that there should be no reason why, in the careful following of the provisional rules of procedure - as was just done in my case - we should not proceed to hear the response of the representative of Kuwait. Indeed, I am surprised that those who voiced most vociferously in the Council their interest yesterday in free debate and free speech should now raise such points of order.

Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): All members of the Council know what happened this morning. It was impossible to comply with our decision yesterday precisely because we had to devote the morning to a discussion of the attempt to change the manner in which the Security Council has always interpreted Rule 27 of its provisional rules of procedure, which says that speakers will speak in a specific order.

I believe it became apparent to Ambassador Pickering that there was no great enthusiasm among the members of the Council for the peculiar manner suggested for the Council's proceedings.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

My delegation has no objection whatsoever to any representative who has requested to participate in our deliberations, doing so as many times as he or she feels necessary. But this morning it was clear that today's meeting would be conducted in accordance with the rules of procedure. Of course, the representative of the United States has the right to propose that the relevant rule not be applied, but not that a new list of speakers be drawn up. Perhaps he could draw up such a list and be kind enough to circulate copies to all members; we could then see what sort of meeting he has in mind. But absent that, it was clear that the President was to observe the order of the existing list of speakers.

If the representative of Saudi Arabia does not wish to speak but prefers to yield his place in the list, the next speaker on the list ought to follow him; that, I believe, would be the representative of Qatar. But I think we ought to listen to the representative of Saudi Arabia and any other representative who wishes to speak - whether members of the Council or not - as many times as they wish to address the Council.

This morning, one of our colleagues reminded us of the Council's practice with respect to the order of speakers; I do not think it is necessary to read out again the Council's customary practice in this regard, but I would note that the Council should follow the order of the list of speakers, or it should determine that the United States has raised a point of order and proposed that the rule not be applied and that a different order be followed. In that event, the Council would have to take a decision, and if the majority of members do not agree with the proposal, the letter of rule 27 must be observed.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): I would recall that the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia was not present at our private informal consultations and is therefore completely unaware of the results of our private deliberations. If an arrangement was agreed upon by members of the Council, it involved only those members. Thus, I think it quite in order that our colleague from Saudi Arabia could, under rule 27, yield his place to the representative of Kuwait if he wishes to do so.

The subject of this debate is Kuwait; how can the Council prevent the representative of Kuwait from speaking, even if he needs to do so several times in order to inform the Council on all aspects of the conflict, and on all aspects of the war which primarily concerns Kuwait?

We had earlier agreed that we would scrupulously observe the principle of the list of speakers. We note that the representative of the United States placed his name on the list following the representative of Kuwait; the representative of the United States complied with spirit of this morning's consensus, placing his name on the list in accordance with the guidelines agreed upon during our consultations. But if questions are raised during the discussion whose answers could edify the Council and lead it to consider some important points, which could guide the Council in its search for a possible peaceful settlement of the Gulf war, I think that is worthwhile.

This closed meeting has been convened to permit a frank, honest and sincere exchange of views; from that clash of ideas, the truth could emerge. For that reason I consider that the representative of Kuwait should be allowed to answer the relevant questions put to him by the representative of the United States.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom): Like the representative of the United States, I marvel at the speed with which the champion of free speech becomes the champion of preventing free speech. Twenty-four hours is a short time in which to change one's mind.

But I marvel even more that the representative of Cuba - who has told us, to my memory, between 10 and 15 times that no decisions can be taken in the next-door room, that it is impossible for any decisions of any sort to be taken there because the meetings there do not exist - has suddenly discovered a use for those meetings. Apparently they serve a great purpose. And we are now told that some decisions were taken this morning which prevent us applying the rules of procedure normally this afternoon.

I, like the representative of Zaire, feel that the right thing is to allow the representative of Kuwait, who is a party to this dispute, to answer the questions.

Does the representative of Cuba not want to hear the answers? Is he not interested in the answers? Perhaps they are a matter of no consequence to him. Perhaps he does not think they will help our debate.

I think it would be much better to allow you, Mr. President, to apply the rules of procedure as they are and to allow the representative of Kuwait to reply to the questions.

Mr. ALARCON DE QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): I am in favour of permitting everyone to express his views on the subject at hand.

When I hear more serious statements from the representative of the United Kingdom I shall ponder them and determine whether they deserve a response.

I propose, at this formal meeting of the Security Council, that the Council respect rule 27 of its rules of procedure. If a vote is necessary, I propose that one be taken.

The PRESIDENT: The representative of the United States asked a number of specific questions of the representative of Kuwait. When he finished, the President called not on the representative of Kuwait but on the representative of Saudi Arabia, who was the next speaker on the list. It is my understanding that the representative of Saudi Arabia then ceded his place on the list of speakers to the representative of Kuwait.

If that was not his intention, there was obviously a misunderstanding, because it was on that basis that I called on the representative of Kuwait: on the basis of the representative of Saudi Arabia's willingness to wait until a later stage to make his presentation - to have a new place on the list of speakers.

I call upon the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia): Thank you, Mr. President, for your generosity. I greatly appreciate it. I thought I had been clear in my statement when I thanked you for having invited me but, realizing how important it is that Kuwait's position should be made as clear as possible to every member of the Council, I said that I was ready to wait here in my seat until the representative of Kuwait had finished his clarification of the points - which should be very important to the Council and to the representatives of Cuba and Yemen in particular - and that I would then make my statement. I did not intend to cede my place on the list of speakers. I leave the judgement up to you, Sir. I do not intend to cede my place, but I will be glad to wait until the representative of Kuwait finishes clarifying the very important points that are of concern to the Council, immediately after which I shall speak, if that is your wish, Mr. President, and the wish of the Council.

The PRESIDENT: In the light of the explanation and clarification given by the representative of Saudi Arabia, the representative of Saudi Arabia still has the floor; the representative of Kuwait can reply to the questions at a later stage.

I would ask the representative of Saudi Arabia to continue with his statement.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)(interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I cannot conceal the very good impression you have made on me during the brief period I have known you. I am also pleased to express my great appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, for the wisdom and proficiency with which he conducted the Council's work last month in circumstances that bring out the abilities of men.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

For the second time in its history, the United Nations is being tested and has taken a decision of war. For the first time in its history, the international Organization has placed all its strength and prestige in support of a decision to guarantee safety for the peoples of our region, to preserve stability in the world at large and to consolidate its path, notwithstanding the manipulations of the transgressors and the enticements of the irresponsible, both regionally and internationally.

The Iraqi régime invaded Kuwait at dawn on 2 August after weeks of artificial storms of sudden alarms and false accusations and - as later became obvious - after years of political planning and military preparations. It invaded an independent and sovereign Arab Islamic country, a country that had for long years played a principal role in helping Iraq itself to preserve its people's dignity and, indeed, had continued to perform that role since assuming its place in the international community by supporting every constructive bilateral, regional and international effort.

The Iraqi régime invaded the State of Kuwait and, in so doing, resorted to all kinds of deception and acts of conspiracy against those who had trusted it and who had struggled to protect it. It was all part of a scheme by Iraq - whose secrets were later revealed - to gain control of the nerve-centre of the international economy and impose domination and its terrorist régime on the region, plunging it into political and military adventures that would have resulted in the ruination of all its countries and peoples.

Everyone has sought - all Members present here, the Security Council, the Secretary-General, international groups, Heads of State and leaders of nations, including King Fahd himself, who has poured his heart, his conscience and his

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abilities into indefatigable efforts - to save Iraq from itself and from what its leadership was weaving in the dark, and to lead it to safety and security, return it to the path of dignity, construction and progress and to protect the region from what has now befallen it. All the kings and leaders of the Arab and Muslim world, all world leaders without exception, have sought to find a solution. They have rejected the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and have condemned its destruction of a people and a State. They have sought to return Iraq to its senses and to persuade it to evacuate Kuwait. Iraq has resisted and grown haughty and arrogant, as if we were living in the Middle Ages. For more than six months, and to this very day, Baghdad has rejected all Security Council resolutions and all mediation designed to restore legitimacy to a country and to restore that country to its people.

We would be deceiving ourselves, we would be hypocrites condoning injustice and rejecting reality, if we failed to acknowledge that the Iraqi régime was given every opportunity to return to the path of wisdom, or if we maintained that it would have agreed to leave Kuwait voluntarily if certain sensitivities had only been addressed. That is the discourse of the ignorant. It is to ignore all the attempts at mediation and the fact that after all those attempts Iraq still did not leave Kuwait, even though it was clear that all the world held it to be at fault. In no uncertain terms Iraq was told what would happen if it held onto Kuwait, if it continued to reject Security Council resolutions and refused to heed the warnings of the Security Council and other States.

To Iraq's apologists and those who maintain that we were in duty bound to give Iraq another chance, we say that no usurper in all of history was ever given the opportunity and time that the Iraqi régime was given to desist from its adventures and to evacuate Kuwait.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

How many emissaries marched to that regime's leader, advising and guiding him, enlightening and promising, warning and threatening? How many emissaries marched to Baghdad for five and a half months, until the middle of January, explaining the consequences of insisting on oppression and continuing the invasion of Kuwait?

Has the game of the guest hostages been forgotten, the game in which each leader or mediator who arrived in Baghdad was given a number of persons to take back to his country, satisfying the purpose of his visit? We ask those who call today for excuses and apologies for Iraqi aggression, while they know that they are thus sacrificing Kuwait as a State and a people, and putting the whole region under threat:

"What would be your attitude today if your people and country were in the position of Kuwait and its people, invaded by one who does not fear the Creator and does not value the human being? He ransacks it, destroys it, kills its sons and violates its women; he did it yesterday and is doing it today, as he will tomorrow. Or is Kuwaiti blood cheap to you? Are the greedy permitted to shed it?"

Generosity with, and the sacrifice of, the countries of other peoples is a losing exercise which backfires on its perpetrators.

There is an ongoing war at this hour, a war that was started by Iraq on 2 August. There followed a pause of five and a half months, in the hope that the Iraqi régime would desist from its adventures. It is a war in which my country and 27 others are participating today to implement Security Council resolutions and international legitimacy against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and against the insistence of the Iraqi régime on continuing its usurpation, ransacking and destruction of the State of Kuwait, at the same time mortgaging the safety and security of the Iraqi people and of the region as a whole. The Iraqi régime bears the whole responsibility, in all its dimensions, for this war, for the price the

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Iraqi people is paying for it, for what the Kuwaiti people has paid and is paying as a victim of this invasion and for all that the coalition countries are bearing and sacrificing in standing up to aggression. Those who support the Iraqi invasion will share this historic responsibility.

The Council has heard, we have heard and will hear, calls - some sincere, while others lack all sincerity - in the name of peace, in the name of children, women and the elderly, in the name of the sick and the new-born, in the name of the wounded and the disabled. They are all calls which touch our deepest feelings, but we ask those who make them:

"Who started the war? Who imposed the battle and moved the armies and invaded Kuwait, who marched with his army to the borders of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the same offensive formations? Did you not hear us when we invoked, in the name of humanity, protection for Kuwait and Iraq? Did you not hear us while we cautioned and warned for the sake of the children, the elderly and the women in Kuwait and Iraq? Who is occupying Kuwait today, and can, today, achieve the evacuation of Kuwait and begin establishing a state of peace? Why did you not go to Baghdad, where the decision to withdraw rests? Has not the Iraqi régime rejected you and your calls, as it still does today? Why do you raise this subject here? What is your purpose in raising it today? I do not object to any subject's being raised in the United Nations, but do you want the whole region to submit to oppression on someone else's account?"

This is the reality of the demand of whoever seeks to dilute the United Nations stand for the implementation of Security Council resolutions at this stage. We know, and you know, that the coalition forces are proceeding on their way to liberate Kuwait, to restore legitimacy to it and to deter oppression in the region. If those who justify what has happened, the apologists for it, have a case

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on the subject of the continuation of war or theinstallation of peace, words here instead of in Baghdad are a hypocrisy which we reject and a deception whose dimensions we know.

The question should be addressed to Baghdad: Will the Iraqi régime withdraw from Kuwait, every inch of Kuwait, and implement all Security Council resolutions, or is achieving its dreams and hopes of expansion and aggression still its objective?

We are concerned about the safety of the Iraqi people. But those who claim to care for Baghdad and its people more than its leaders and people do - are hypocrites.

What is required of Iraq for all these operations to stop is its withdrawal from Kuwait and its implementation of Security Council resolutions. As for the deceptive talk of saving a leader's face, being considerate of a President's feelings, or being careful about a leader's sensitivities: in view of the continued slaughter of the people and State of Kuwait and the war in the region, such talk, which is an attempt to deceive peoples, is rejected. We hope that all forums, and above all the Security Council, will reject it.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. AL NI'MAH (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): I am making this statement as Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar and in my capacity as Chairman of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC).

I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your presidency of the Security Council. I am sure that the work of the Council this month will be crowned with success, given your well-known competence and experience. I wish to pay a tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Zaire, for the wisdom, skill and experience with which he guided the Council's work last month.

I should like to place before the Council the collective position of the States members of the GCC with regard to current events in the Gulf. The States members of the GCC have adopted a principled position, which has remained unchanged ever since the tragedy that has been visited upon the area, as follows: All Security Council resolutions on the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait should be fully implemented. These States are convinced that the complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of the legitimate Government, headed by Sheikh Al-Sabah, is in keeping with international legitimacy and respect for the provisions of the United Nations Charter. If these resolutions remain unimplemented, the Council will have failed in its responsibility and duty with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The States members of the GCC hold the unanimous view that resort to all necessary means, in accordance with Security Council resolution 678 (1990), is intended to achieve that aim, which has eluded us following upon the failure of economic sanctions and the intransigence of the Iraqi regime, which has rejected all attempts to restore peace by all the parties that have shown a keen understanding for Iraq's interests as well. These attempts are still ongoing; there are parties that have tried to stop the bloodshed and to spare the area further tragedy by convincing the Iraqi leadership to respect international

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legitimacy and comply with the resolutions of the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Security Council.

However, all these attempts have fallen on deaf ears in Iraq; hence recourse to the other means has been and remains the only way to secure implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council.

The tragedy befalling Iraq and its fraternal people has been brought about by those who have flouted the will of the international community and refuse to take any decision that would put an end to the use of force. Hence Iraq and the people of Iraq have become victims of the aggression launched against Kuwait and victims of those who obstinately refuse to reverse this aggression against Kuwait. This is a clear and unprecedented violation of the will of the international community.

The members of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) have welcomed the good offices and attempts to bring about peace, wherever they originated. The GCC members expected that such initiatives would bear fruit and that the Iraqi regime would respond positively and fully implement the resolutions of the Security Council. However, our expectations and those of well-meaning and peaceful loving peoples have been swept away by the wind. The efforts on which we had pinned our hopes have come to naught. We had hoped that the Iraqis would regain their senses and respond to the voice of logic and wisdom by accepting the resolutions of the Council, which represents international legitimacy and to which all members of the international community, including Iraq, are committed.

I believe that, while we are witnessing this horrendous event, we cannot but appeal to the Security Council to insist on and remain committed to the resolutions it has adopted and to resort to all means to secure their implementation. We are fully convinced that any slackening in the Council would constitute a set-back to international legitimacy and undermine the ability of the United Nations to restore international peace and security and compel compliance from those who fail to

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respect its decisions. The law of God and the sanctity of humanity should be preserved. These are two pillars of the United Nations and international law.

May I say that the GCC members, given all this suffering, are entitled to seek a new dawn that will bring the full implementation of Security Council resolutions. Should that come about, our region will have its wounds healed and peace will prevail, something which will enable the region once again to follow the path of peace and development.

I would like to refer to the final communiqué of the eleventh session of the Supreme Council of the States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council and to its Doha Declaration.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

These two documents have been distributed as United Nations documents under the symbols S/22191 and A/45/948.

But the Gulf Cooperation Council has not limited itself to those documents in defining its position on the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. It has also defined its views on the region in the post-war period, anticipating the economic and security arrangements that will be put in place there and that will enable the peoples of the region to look forward to a better future, a future of prosperity and development in the atmosphere of peace and security to which all the peoples of the region, including those of Iraq, are entitled.

In the past our Arab nation played a great role in and made a contribution to the march of history and civilization. That should be a source of pride to all Arabs. They made and are still making an effective contribution. I repeat that this should be a source of pride to all Arabs, including the Iraqis, who contributed greatly to the efforts in this regard.

If rights are restored, if confidence replaces fear, if peace replaces aggression, then tranquillity will come to our homeland. We shall be guided by the contributions of our ancestors. We shall be convinced that the road on which we shall embark will lead us to prosperity and development.

We are confident that insistence on and commitment to the Security Council resolutions will help bring about peace in our area and will enable the Arab region to engage once again in the march towards development, inspired by the heritage of our heavenly messengers and Islam, the religion of tolerance.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

Here I should like to pay a tribute to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar for the efforts he exerted with so much devotion to convince the Iraqi régime of the need fully to implement the Security Council resolutions. He conducted negotiations with the interested parties. He made two trips to the area - the first, before the adoption of resolution 678 (1990) and the second, before the expiration of the time-limit set by the United Nations. But there was no response from the leadership of Iraq to all his good offices or to those of other well-meaning and peace-loving people. The members of the Gulf Cooperation Council express their gratitude to the Secretary-General for his persistent efforts to bring about peace.

In conclusion, I state again that all attempts to resolve the conflict without resort to all the means necessary to implement the Security Council resolutions should be addressed to fraternal Iraq. After all they have done, after all the disrespect they have shown for the truth, cannot the leaders in Iraq respond positively to the voice of wisdom and reason?

We look to the Security Council in this dark hour. We count on its commitment to and insistence on the implementation of the Security Council resolutions. It can thereby provide us with great help in overcoming the difficulties that have befallen us and avoiding further tragedy for the area. The Council's steadfast attitude will guide the aggressor towards the right path.

The aggressor has flouted the international will and seems to be unable to see the rising sun of the new world order. I appeal to the Security Council to show the aggressor that rising sun. It is extremely difficult to discern the truth in a sea of darkness. But the Security Council's commitment to and insistence on the implementation of the Security Council resolutions will convince the aggressor that it must listen to the voice of reason, thereby enabling mankind to look forward to a better future and setting it on the path towards peace and security and

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tranquillity. This can be brought about only through the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council, whose only aim in resorting to the present means has been to liberate Kuwait and restore legitimacy. If this aim is attained, our area's aspirations to peace, security and justice will also be fulfilled.

Through the Security Council, we appeal once again to the leadership in Iraq to listen to the voice of peace, the voice of reason, and to help implement the Security Council resolutions calling for the withdrawal of troops from Kuwait and the restoration of the legitimate Government of Kuwait, without any pre-conditions.

Our hearts are bleeding because of the tragedy that has befallen our people in Kuwait and our people in Iraq. These two homelands, Iraq and Kuwait, are very dear to our hearts. All of us feel such sadness at the suffering of the victims of aggression. Baghdad, like Kuwait City and Riyadh, is very dear to our hearts. God knows that we only wish prosperity and peace for Baghdad, a seat of civilization. What can I say at this time when my heart is being broken by what is happening? Blood is being shed for no valid reason.

(Mr. Al-Ni'mah, Qatar)

Tragedies are being inflicted on the city and state of Baghdad. Oh God, how can this be? My face is black with sorrow because those in the leadership are unaware of what is going on. They do not respect good-neighbourliness. They have no respect for a nation that has contributed to the march of human civilization.

Palestine in weeping, Kuwait is weeping, Iraq is weeping because of the aggression that has been committed.

We should be guided by the Holy Koran and the precepts of Islam. God will guide us. Our last word is this: we are grateful to God.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Qatar for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Iraq, upon whom I now call.

Mr. AL-ANBARI (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me at the outset to express to you, Sir, our warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. May I also express my thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Zaire, for his serious efforts and many endeavours during his presidency of the Security Council last month.

I wish also to congratulate the new members of the Security Council: Ecuador, Austria, Belgium, India and Zimbabwe.

This meeting has been convened more than three weeks after some members of the Security Council, including the five States of the Arab Maghreb, requested a meeting. The delay has been caused by the objection of the United States and its allies intended to mask the crimes their armies are perpetrating against Iraq, again reaffirming that the United States does not want the Council, or the world, to play any positive role since they imposed resolution 678 (1990) and other, previous, resolutions of the Council on the so-called crisis in the Gulf.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

The Council's inability to meet in all these weeks - which contradicts its rules of procedure - despite the escalation of the armed aggression against Iraq, again confirms that the Council is no longer an international security council. It has no credibility or legitimacy. It is merely an instrument for the covering up of the worst of international crimes, which is now being perpetrated in the heartland of the Arab nation.

Furthermore the attempt of some members of the Council to stop this being an open public meeting as required by the provisional rules of procedure and to make it a private meeting was aimed at denying some Member States the opportunity to unmask the crimes being perpetrated in the name of this august Council against mankind, against the people of Iraq, and against its rights.

The attempt to justify the holding of such a meeting is an attempt not to give Iraq the impression of hesitation on the part of the Council. But the Security Council has no such impression. It knows that since the so-called crisis in the Gulf began the Council has become an American instrument representing American interests and that the United States will continue its aggression even if the Security Council were to adopt a resolution on a cease-fire or on halting the rain of bombs on the defenceless civilians of Iraq.

This is such a contradiction that the majority of States that requested this meeting are now boycotting it because it has been turned from a public meeting into a private one.

Moments ago we witnessed yet another attempt to open a scenario which would give one or the other State the right to speak for our State through succeeding responses to a number of prepared questions whose only objective is to disseminate propaganda and to deny others the opportunity to speak at an appropriate time.

We are happy that at least this scenario has failed totally.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

The nature of the aggression led by the United States against Iraq becomes clear when we consider its background and when we come to know the preparations of the United States for the aggression were started long ago and preceded the so-called crisis in the Gulf and the Council's adoption of resolution 678 (1990) on 29 November 1990. If the United States found in that resolution a fig leaf to cover up the criminal nature of its aggression against Iraq, then that resolution is indeed a document that makes the States members of the Security Council, which adopted it, co-perpetrators of the crime.

It may be recalled that throughout 1990 and up until today the United States and its allies and satellites have waged a hysterical propaganda campaign against Iraq, its leadership and its army. Things escalated until there were allegations that Iraq might have nuclear weapons that threatened international peace and security. That hysterical campaign was aimed at preparing international public opinion, particularly American public opinion, for an aggression against Iraq to eradicate its economic, military and industrial potential.

Following the commencement of the so-called crisis in the Gulf, public-relations companies began making almost sadistic statements; some have even labelled Iraq sadistic and used many other such adjectives. Such words cannot be used to describe Iraq, its people or its army; they are suited, rather, to those now waging aggression against Iraq.

At its forty-fifth session, at a meeting on 4 December 1990, the General Assembly adopted a resolution recognizing that

> "an armed attack or a threat of an armed attack on a safeguarded nuclear facility, operational or under construction, would create a situation in which the Security Council would have to act immediately in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including measures under Chapter VII". (General Assembly resolution 45/58 J)

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

The only State that voted against that resolution is the very one that conducted attacks against Iraqi nuclear establishments under international supervision on the very first day of the aggression against Iraq. That State is the United States of America, which has the largest arsenal of nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

The fact that the United States was the only Member State of the United Nations to vote against that resolution demonstrates its firm intention to attack the peaceful, safeguarded nuclear facilities in Iraq. If such acts exceeded the framework of Security Council resolution 678 (1990), regardless of its illegitimacy, we believe that they represent at the same time an international crime to which the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter should be applied against the United States and its collaborators in aggression, in accordance with all the documents of the General Assembly I have just mentioned.

The United States and its collaborators have exploited the so-called crisis in the Gulf to force resolution after resolution; to besiege Iraq by sea, land and air; to prevent food, medicine and spare parts from reaching Iraq in order to starve its people and weaken its economy; to escalate war hysteria; and finally to prepare the political ground for aggression and to wage the war against Iraq that has continued since 16 January.

The second phase of the United States' aggressive policy against Iraq was to try to shoot down any peaceful initiative to solve the crisis, such as that of His Highness King Hussein to hold a mini-summit in Jiddah for the kings and Presidents of Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Yemen on 5 August 1990. And the United States continues by all means available to abort all Arab and other initiatives.

The third phase of the American plot was the sending of troops and weapons to the sacred Arab peninsula and the Arab Gulf under the pretext of defending against an alleged invasion - an invention of the United States. Following the massing of troops and by a unilateral resolution of 8 November 1990, it declared that its forces in the Gulf had become arrayed offensively against Iraq, even though the Security Council, pushed by the United States, had applied further inhuman economic sanctions against Iraq, again requiring application of the provisions of

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Chapter VII of the Charter. Any observer of the situation would have noticed the American escalation through propaganda, through the very way statements were made, and through the threats made by American officials and the media.

There was one single goal: to convince American and world public opinion of the inevitability of war and the impossibility of a peaceful solution. America's immediate rejection of President Saddam Hussein's initiative of 12 August 1990 calling for the application of international legitimacy to all States in the area, in accordance with unified rules to be stipulated by the Security Council, to ensure the withdrawal of all forces, taking into consideration the particular aspects of each situation, emphasizes yet again the United States' lack of concern for international legitimacy and peaceful solutions. It is plotting aggression. It is seeking an opportunity to wage aggression under cover of apparent international legitimacy against Iraq and the Arab nation.

However, we all know - all Member States of the United Nations know, the man on the street in the United States and throughout the world knows - that this war is actually an American, North Atlantic, and Zionist immoral war of revenge against Iraq, its people, its army, its leadership and its civilization. It is also a warning to the Arab nation of American and Israeli hegemony.

That fact was reaffirmed by the Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv on 12 February, when it said that, in the event of an American victory in the war in the Gulf, such a victory would be that of the white man against the Bedouin and of Christianity and Judaism against Islam. The Voice of America broadcast a quotation from Ma'ariv on the 9th of this month. The expressions being used by spokesmen of the American forces in the peninsula demonstrate that racism. They talk of Arab women as "Ninja women" and of Arab Bedouins as "natural inhabitants", as was reported by the New York Times on 10 February 1991.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

Any talk of an international coalition or claims that the dispute is between Iraq and the world are mere manoeuvres to conceal the provocations and blackmail that have made many Governments cave in to American pressure and collaborate with the United States to hide the truth of American aggression against Iraq. The United States Government is well aware of the ugliness of this war and of its aggression. That is why it has come to describe it as a "just" war, as if it imagined that its terrorism against the States of the world and their people would induce them to believe that raining hundreds of thousands of bombs from high altitudes, burning everything on the ground, and killing Iraqi adults and children alike, could represent a just war.

If America believes that the idea of just war is represented by the Crusades against the Arab and Moslem world, it is only revealing its racist nature. In fact, it is ignoring the American Council of Churches, which in mid-November 1990 condemned the war and called for restoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, Lebanese and Cypriots. The United States zeal to avoid human casualties on its side in order to avoid the ire of the American people has made it wage unprecedented technological and chemical warfare through intense high-altitude air-raids, using land-to-land and air-to-air missiles, even though it may lead to the eradication of the Iraqi people and the destruction of the hydroelectrical infrastructure, as well as dams, bridges, roads and trees.

However, the United States claims that it is an honest, civilized country most keen to maintain human rights. The Defense Department, when mentioning the use of chemical weapons when needed in Iraq, adds yet another proof that America, through its aggression, has set aside the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is an attempt to put an end to the "dirty" aspects of war. The use of such gases, in addition to intensive, round-the-clock air-raids that do not discriminate between a mosque and

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

a church, a camp or an old man, makes the United States and its allies outlaws in international illegitimacy.

While we consider here the situation in the Arab Gulf, thousands of bombs are falling on all the cities and villages of Iraq. During the first day of the aggression on 16 January 1990, American aircraft dropped 80,000 tons of explosives, equivalent to one and a half times the force of the nuclear bomb dropped by the United States on Hiroshima.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

Since then, the United States and its collaborators in aggression have launched thousands of air sorties each day against Iraq. In the first three weeks there were 45,000 sorties. Eighty-five thousand tons of explosives were dropped on Iraq. In terms of TNT, that is the equivalent of five Hiroshima bombs. The United States Administration and its collaborators - Zionists, Atlantic partners and crusaders alike - are persisting in their aggression against Iraq, caring nothing for the destruction of the air, land and sea environment in Iraq and throughout the Arab Gulf region. During the first two days of the aggression, Iraq's peaceful nuclear and other industrial facilities were destroyed. This has led to the escape of a great deal of radiation and gas, killing many innocent civilians and perhaps causing deformities in future generations.

Such actions show that the United States and its allies will not stop at violating the Charter of the United Nations or at exceeding the objectives and limits of the insulting resolution 678 (1990). They have actually violated the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War; they have violated the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the General Assembly resolution prohibiting attacks on nuclear facilities, both active and under construction, and all religious and moral values.

United States barbarity has not stopped at killing civilians, destroying hospitals, schools and mosques and polluting the environment; it has attacked Iraq's very heritage from Nineveh in the north to Babel in the midlands to Ur in the south. Iraq, the cradle of civilization, contains more than half a million archaeological sites; of these 50,000 are of the highest importance, including between 100 and 200 ancient urban centres that prospered over the ages. This is an attempt to destroy the heritage of human civilization.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Iraq has provided comprehensive details of the acts of aggression in his letters dated 24 January 1991 and 1 February 1991 addressed to the Secretary-General. Today, His Excellency sent a third letter on the heinous crime perpetrated by the forces of aggression when they bombed a civilian bomb shelter in a residential quarter of Baghdad. Four hundred innocent civilians, mostly women, children and elderly people, died in that attack - as we saw on television screens the world over. That ugly crime swells the black record of United States-Zionist aggression against our militant people.

We call on the world to condemn that ugly crime and to reveal the truth about the aggression being perpetrated by the traditional forces of colonialism and imperialism under the leadership of the United States. Iraq lays full responsibility in the eyes of history and mankind for those crimes against our people and our country at the door of those parties. To condone such crimes in silence brings shame upon the United Nations. The States which voted in favour of resolution 678 (1990) bear a legal, political and moral responsibility for these crimes, for by bowing the the will of the United States, agreeing to that shameful resolution, they enabled the great criminal, the United States, to perpetrate those crimes. They will continue to bear that responsibility unless they firmly take an honourable position favouring an end to the aggression and the crimes against mankind perpetrated by the United States.

Since the barbaric raids have failed to break the backs of the Iraqi people, those United States raids have grown in intensity. Civilian urban areas have been bombed, along with all kinds of civilian infrastructure such as power stations and sewage facilities. This carries with it the threat of the spread of epidemics among the population, particularly among women and the elderly. We believe the number of women, children and the elderly among the civilian victims has reached tens of thousands.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

That brief description of plan prepared long ago by the United States for its aggresion against Iraq, and of its implementation through intensive air-raids involving the dropping of tens of thousands of tons of explosives and gases daily from high altitudes - over 30,000 feet - gives the lie to the ridiculous United States claims that it is eager to respect the rules of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. The way in which the United States attack is being carried out makes the bombardment of civilian facilities and urban areas inevitable: the raids are of great intensity and are being carried out from very high altitudes. We believe that the United States destruction of entire neighbourhoods and other non-military infrastructure is premeditated. The United States knows that such attacks violate all the rules of international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and other instruments including that recently adopted at the World Summit for Children.

In sum, the United States and its allies have perpetrated, and continue to perpetrate, premeditated international crimes. They are like all the international criminals who came before them; indeed, they make them seem like amateurs.

We cannot but wonder: Why this aggression to destroy Iraq? Why this attempt to force us back into the Dark Ages? There are three main interlinked reasons.

My Government believes that the so-called Gulf crisis was a pretext to launch a new war against Iraq, the heart of the Arab nation, the hope of its new generation and the heart of its steadfastness against United States-Zionist imperialism and its ambitions towards Arab wealth. Iraq is the only Arab State whose technological, economic and military capabilities enable it to take political decisions independent of United States-Zionist hegemony. Iraq is now in a heroic war against old-time colonialism, represented by the United States, the United

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

Kingdom and France. In the past those countries had policies of colonialism and of enslaving peoples, pillaging their wealth; they planted the Zionist entity in the heart of the Arab homeland and created artificial entities to protect their oil companies.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Asia, Africa and Latin America who have suffered the injustice and crimes of colonialism and neo-colonialism see the so-called new international order as a new era of terrorism and threats against peoples striving for their freedom and independence and for relations of equality among States.

The second reason for the United States aggression is an internal one. During the cold war the United States military machine and the banks and corporations connected with it enjoyed unprecedented growth. But with the end of the cold war the American people expected a so-called peace dividend to make United States society more "human"; they expected a higher standard of living; they expected homeless Americans to find shelter; they expected the poor to have medical care; they expected the environment to be cleaned up.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

There was therefore a need for a regional war to put an end to all these expectations and hopes and to remilitarize the United States economy in order to make sure that the military-industrial complex would again be supreme. Now communism is no longer the enemy. The enemy is the third world's desire for national independence, which requires maintaining a state of siege and preventing the States of the third world from uniting their economic and geographical resources.

Finally, I must stress that the so-called new world order is nothing but the offspring of a new United States imperialism, an imperialism that disposes of the largest military arsenal in the world but that has no comparable economic or political force. Rather than trying to deal with its economic problems - the deterioration of the United States economy owing to competition in world markets with Japan and Germany - the military establishment decided to rely on military force to gain control of natural resources, and in particular the oil resources of the Arab Gulf. If its hegemony in the Gulf were to be consolidated, the United States would have the upper hand against its competitors in the economic sphere who were under the United States nuclear umbrella until only yesterday and who, according to the present United States plan, must now depend upon a United States military presence in the Gulf to ensure their oil supplies under conditions set by the United States.

It is clear that the United States aggression against Iraq was prepared for with the assistance of pressures brought to bear against members of the Security Council and through attempts made to terrorize the majority of those members. The Council has now lost control over the crisis and, indeed, its credibility in the United Nations and in the world. The United Nations and its credibility as an organization working for peace and international legitimacy are the first victims of United States hegemony in the aftermath of the cold war.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

The latest manoeuvres to attempt to delay this meeting of the Security Council and to turn it into a private meeting are merely further evidence of United States hegemony over the United Nations. If the United States continues with its acts of hegemony and aggression, it - God willing - will be the loser. All the States of the Arab Gulf, all the States of the third world, will find themselves kneeling before Zionist-American hegemony, militarily, politically and economically. However, United States aggression and its long-term plans set it on a path of confrontation not merely with Iraq but ultimately with the world as a whole. Force cannot kill off the nationalist uprisings in the world. Force cannot put an end to technological development in Europe and Japan. The United States empire will have an end in Europe and in Asia.

Finally, Iraq has proved to the United States and its collaborators and satellites - and to the world - that aggression against it, however barbaric, will not be just a pleasant stroll for the aggressors. The price will be very high. Iraq is steadfast. Until the aggressors withdraw we shall exercise our right and our duty to resort to legitimate self-defence against the attempts being made by the United States and its co-criminals to kill us off. In the end, God willing, we shall win through our steadfastness, through the strength of our people and our leadership and through the solidarity of the Arab nation and the Islamic peoples and of all who love peace in the world.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Iraq for his kind words addressed to me.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom): This is the first occasion on which the Security Council has met formally since the expiry on 15 January of the six-week pause of goodwill set up in Security Council resolution 678 (1990) and since my country, along with a considerable number of others, under the authority

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

of that resolution initiated military action designed to bring about the liberation of Kuwait. It is appropriate, therefore, in addition to the submission of the regular reports called for in operative paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 678 (1990), which we are already providing, to use this occasion to address some of the issues which have been raised in public debate and also by some members of the Council.

Some have suggested that military action being taken by the allies is in some way excessive or disproportionate and thus exceeds the "all necessary means" authorized in resolution 678 (1990) to bring about the liberation of Kuwait. But the nature and scope of the military action is dictated not by some abstract set of criteria but by the military capacity of the aggressor, who has refused all attempts to remove him from Kuwait by peaceful means and has thus necessitated the military action in course. In global terms Iraq has the fourth largest army in the world, after the Soviet Union, China and the United States. It has 1.85 million troops. That army is backed up by a large modern air force; it has more than twice as many battle tanks as Britain and France put together; it is equipped with long-range missiles targeted at and now fired at its neighbours; it is equipped with chemical weapons which it has not hesitated in the past to use against its neighbours and against its own population; it has biological and nuclear weapons programmes whose degree of progress is unknown but whose objective is clear. Iraq's defence expenditure in 1988 was approximately 28 per cent of its gross domestic product. That compares with figures of just over 4 per cent for the United Kingdom, 2.9 per cent for France and 5.6 per cent for the United States.

It is that military machine which seized Kuwait last August; it is that military machine which holds it to this day; and it is that military machine which now has to be removed from Kuwait by force. It is to that aim and in those specific cicumstances that the force used must correspond, and it does so.

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

Now, some have argued that the fighting should be confined to the territory of occupied Kuwait. A moment's thought will show why that self-limitation would not make it possible to achieve the objectives of resolution 678 (1990) - though I may add that coalition attacks are now concentrating more and more on Iraqi ground forces in and around Kuwait. But it requires a massive effort to dislodge this huge Iraqi war machine from Kuwait. Its logistical support and resources extend far beyond the confines of Kuwait. So hostilities cannot possibly be confined to the geographical limits of that country alone.

But that does not mean that the allies have extended their objectives beyond those laid down in successive Security Council resolutions - namely, the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, the return of Kuwait's legitimate Government and the restoration of peace and stability to the region. We have not. We are not seeking to bring about the destruction, occupation or dismemberment of Iraq or to decide who governs that country. We are seeking the liberation of Kuwait, no more and no less. The military action will end as soon as the objectives laid down by the Council have been achieved.

There have, alas, been civilian casualties. That cannot be denied. It is a source of pain and regret. Our quarrel is not with the people of Iraq, but with their rulers. The allied forces have been given the strictest instructions to strive to keep such casualties to the minimum and to avoid damaging sites of religious and cultural significance. That is a sharp contrast to Iraq's performance, which has included the indiscriminate firing of missiles at centres of civilian population and then rejoicing publicly at the anguish and destruction they have caused.

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

Many reports of objective eyewitnesses have borne testimony to the general accuracy of allied bombing attacks and to the successful avoidance, in the vast majority of the many thousands of sorties flown, of centres of population.

Iraq is a large country, with much uninhabited space. Iraqi military installations and production facilities could easily have been sited far away from centres of civilian population. That they have not been is merely another sign of the Iraqi leadership's disdain for the safety of its own population. There is now increasing evidence that military equipment and installations are actually being moved into civilian areas in order to protect them from attack.

It is rightly asked how this military conflict can be brought to an end. The short answer is by Iraq's committing itself unequivocally and irrevocably to full withdrawal from Kuwait and taking immediate, concrete measures to implement that withdrawal. So far there is no sign of that.

To the contrary, by rejecting the approach made by President Gorbachev after allied military operations began, by its deplorable and unacceptable public attacks on the Secretary-General and by its lack of response to any of the peace initiatives put forward since 15 January, Iraq has made a mockery of the efforts of those who are trying to find a peaceful solution. We have no wish to discourage those efforts, so long as they are firmly based on the 12 Security Council resolutions adopted since the invasion of 2 August. But to be realistic such efforts must begin in Baghdad. That is the door at which they must knock.

The negative response reportedly given by Iraq to the messages from the Iranian authorities gives us no reason at all to be optimistic that Iraq's leaders are ready to take the action that could put an end to the conflict and loss of life.

In these circumstances, the idea of an unconditional pause of any kind makes no sense at all. It would only give Iraq time to regroup its forces and to repair the damage to its military installations, thus ensuring that any resumed hostilities

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were longer and more costly in human lives that would otherwise be the case.

President Saddam Hussein tries to represent this conflict as one of a weak Iraq defending itself against the strong, as one on behalf of the Arab nation, as a Muslim holy war. How does he dare? This conflict began on 2 August with the unprovoked invasion of a small country by its larger and infinitely stronger neighbour. Iraq has since tried to swallow Kuwait and indeed to wipe it off the map, and I find it macabre again that this afternoon we have to sit and listen to the representative of Iraq delivering a lengthy speech which manages not to mention the word "Kuwait". I look forward to the day when he will be compelled to use that word again.

Aggressors often claim religious motives, even when the religion in question forbids their acts. It is so in this case. Iraq's aggression has been condemned by leading Islamic scholars, and 13 of the countries participating in the coalition are Muslim. Let us also remember that the invasion of Kuwait was condemned by the Arab League and is opposed by the vast majority of Arab States.

The invasion of Kuwait has not advanced the cause of Palestine; it has set it back. Nor was it designed to advance it. The Palestinians are, alas, no more than the pawns on the chessboard of President Saddam Hussein's ambition.

Nor is this a conflict pitting the poorer countries against the richer. President Saddam Hussein is, I am afraid, no Robin Hood, somehow seeking to take from the rich in order to give to the poor. The facts are rather different. Between 1980 and 1990 Iraq, a country far from being one of the poorest among developing countries, received many billions of dollars in aid from other Arab countries, more *per capita* than the transfers to much poorer countries from the whole developed world. The trouble was that that money did not go to help the economic development of Iraq, let alone of its poorer Arab brethren; it went to

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finance the grandiose military schemes of its ruler, to finance a war against one of its neighbours, Iran, and to finance the building-up of the armed forces which carried out the aggression against another of its neighbours, Kuwait, which is the cause of the present dispute.

The fact is that this confrontation is not about any of those things. It is a confrontation between collective security, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations, and the law of the jungle. It is a confrontation between a world increasingly committed to international rights and obligations and one where might is right. Since 2 August Iraq has broken any number of its international obligations. It has invaded and annexed its neighbour by force; it has pillaged and tortured Kuwait's population; it has taken hostages; since 15 January it has fired missiles at a country not a party to the dispute; it has defied its obligations towards prisoners-of-war under the Geneva Conventions; and it has resorted to unprecedented environmental terrorism. Now it is threatening further actions against international law.

Once before in this century a system of collective security, the League of Nations, failed to prevail over the law of the jungle, and one of the consequences was the Second World War. My country believes the system of collective security contained in the United Nations Charter is worth fighting for, and we intend to see that it prevails.

I should like to conclude by saying that I was sorry the representative of Iraq so misunderstood the reason why a number of representatives feel that the asking of questions of some of the delegations that appear before the Council was designed to temporize or indeed to make propaganda from those countries that are cooperating with Kuwait over its liberation. In order to make it quite clear that that is not so, I wish now to address to him a few questions that he might be able

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to answer before the end of the debate. It would certainly help the Council's work if he were able to do so.

First, will Iraq withdraw immediately and unconditionally from Kuwait, as required by the Security Council resolutions?

Secondly, will the representative of Iraq give an undertaking that Iraq will abide by the Geneva Conventions regarding the treatment of prisoners of war?

Thirdly, how are the prisoners of war from the countries of the allies being treated? Why have their names not been given to the International Committee of the Red Cross? Where are they being held, and in what conditions?

Fourthly, will the representative of Iraq give an undertaking that Iraq will abide by its international obligations not to use chemical or biological weapons?

I think the answers to those questions could advance the Council's work a very long way if they were helpful. So I hope that the representative of Iraq will reflect very carefully on the possibility of speaking again before our debate is over and giving us some answers to those questions.

Meanwhile, I should like merely to associate myself with the representative of the United States in saying that the questions addressed to the representative of Kuwait are very germane, and I look forward very much to hearing the answers to them before the end of the debate.

The representative of Saudi Arabia might possibly reflect on two questions to which I should like to hear the answers. First, what is the nature of the military threat which Iraq has represented to Saudi Arabia since 2 August and represents today? Secondly, has Saudi Arabia received any indications, directly or indirectly, of Iraq's readiness to comply with Security Council resolutions and withdrawal from Kuwait?

Mr. LI Daoyu (China) (interpretation from Chinese): First, Sir, it is a pleasure for me to extend my congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you success in guiding the Council's work at such a crucial moment. The Chinese delegation will cooperate closely with you.

I should also like to thank Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire, President of the Security Council in January, for his excellent guidance of the Security Council's work last month.

The international community made great efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis. We very much regret that all those efforts failed and war finally broke out.

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

The war has been going on for nearly a month, inflicting disastrous losses of life and property. Many innocent civilians have been killed and many non-military installations demolished. We express our deep grief and sympathy. We are deeply concerned and worried that there exists a serious danger of the expansion and escalation of the war, and the situation is extremely grave.

From the very start of the Gulf crisis, the Chinese Government has adopted a principled and responsible position. We have opposed Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait and demanded that Iraq withdraw its troops from Kuwait immediately and unconditionally, and restore and respect the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and legitimate Government of Kuwait. At the same time, the Chinese Government has consistently held that the Gulf crisis should be settled through peaceful means within the framework of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. We believe that, while a peaceful solution through negotiations may take longer, the cost will be lower, whereas the use of force will not provide a solution in a short time either, and there exists the possibility of a protracted and expanded war for which all the parties concerned will pay a high price.

Consideration should be given to the fact that war has its own logic, independent of man's will, and that war will lead to many serious consequences, difficult to estimate at present. Modern war is cruel. The longer the war lasts, the more serious the consequences will be. Therefore, we once again call upon the belligerent parties to exercise the greatest restraint and prevent the spread and expansion of the flames of war so that the people of the Middle East and the Gulf region and the countries concerned will be saved from greater disasters, thus creating favourable conditions and providing opportunities for the international community to continue its search for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

The Gulf war has caused universal concern and anxiety in the international community. Some States' leaders have put forward many peace proposals for an early

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end to the war. We appreciate their efforts. We are of the view that, in order to give peace efforts a chance for progress, there should exist the following elements: first, Iraq should signify that it will withdraw its troops from Kuwait immediately; secondly, the parties concerned agree to seek a peaceful solution; thirdly, the belligerent parties will exercise restraint so as to reduce hostilities and prevent the expansion and escalation of the war; fourthly, the settlement of the Middle East question should be scheduled; fifthly, the arrangements after the Gulf war should be made mainly by the countries in the region and foreign military forces should withdraw from the Gulf region.

The Chinese Government has always supported the positive role played by the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the relevant States Members of the United Nations in seeking a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis. Together with the international community, we are willing to continue to make our own contributions to achieving an early solution to this crisis and restoring peace and stability in the Gulf region.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. MUNTEANU (Romania): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, for the consummate art you have displayed in your capacity as President of the Security Council during this particularly busy and delicate period in the activities of this body. My delegation is confident that your very able stewardship will help us to achieve progress in the consideration of the item on our agenda. We also pay a highly deserved tribute to your predecessor in the presidency, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire, for the exemplary manner in which he guided the Council's work in January.

Romania's position on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait has been presented many times before the Council. In fact, from the very first hours after the

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invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, Romania made known its stand, stating that no reason whatsoever could justify the use of force against a sovereign and independent State. Romania condemned the annexation of Kuwait and demanded the immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal of the Iraqi forces.

My country is strongly committed to morality and legality in all spheres of domestic and international life. It has made clear in all its statements on the item under consideration that a solution to the Persian Gulf conflict can be based only on the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. It is in this context that we joined in sponsoring and voted in favour of resolution 678 (1990), which authorizes Member States cooperating with the Government of Kuwait to use all necessary means to uphold and imnplement resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area. Because of Iraq's refusal fully to comply with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, resolution 678 (1990) is in process of being implemented by the use of force. In so doing, the international community made it clear to Iraq that there is no alternative to respecting the United Nations decisions and the principles of international law.

In fact, paragraph 3 of resolution 678 (1990) is addressed to the international community. It is in accordance with that paragraph that my country took recently an important political decision. I had the honour to summarize the content of that decision in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, subsequently circulated as document S/22206, dated 8 February 1991. With the Council's permission, I should like to recall the main elements of the decision taken by Romania. In accordance with paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 678 (1990) the Government of Romania has proposed and the Parliament of Romania has approved the sending to Saudi Arabia of a surgical hospital for medical assistance having a capacity of 200 beds and a staff of 360 persons.

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Similar approval has been given for the sending to Saudi Arabia of a unit of the Romanian Army at a strength of 180 persons, which can perform tasks of chemical decontamination.

The two units have been formed on a voluntary basis and will be stationed behind the operational area. They will perform a humanitarian mission.

This decision by Romania is based on resolution 678 (1990), which requests all States to provide appropriate support for the actions undertaken to liberate Kuwait and to restore international peace and security in the Gulf area. This decision to send the surgical hospital and the decontamination unit to Saudi Arabia will become effective after the conclusion of the necessary agreements.

It has been rightly pointed out that the failure of attempts to achieve a peaceful solution to the Persian Gulf crisis has created a new situation, in which the destruction and suffering of the people of Iraq, a part of the great Arab nation, are increasing day by day. We deeply regret the human losses and suffering. They are indeed great. But no one should forget who bears the full responsibility for the invasion of Kuwait, for the outbreak of war and for its tragic consequences. It is only through the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions that an end can be put to this tragic situation. That is why Iraq should clearly and unequivocally declare that it will fully comply with the Security Council resolutions.

It should also be stressed that Iraq is not the only country suffering the consequences of the conflict in the Gulf. Above all, we should not forget Kuwait and its plight, its daily suffering and the violation of human rights in that country. Saudi Arabia has lived and is still living under a terrible threat. There is also Israel, subject to an unprovoked attack. On the other hand, all the countries that have invoked Article 50 of the Charter are being confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of measures established by

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resolution 661 (1990). The Security Council knows very well the price of the implementation of sanctions against Iraq. For Romania, the strict observance of sanctions against Iraq has meant considerable losses, and the hardship is compounded by the already difficult conditions of the Romanian economy. These losses and difficulties come at a moment of decisive importance for the economic reforms in Romania, and they generate additional suffering in the life of our people. Despite these difficulties, Romania is strictly observing and fully applying the Security Council resolutions.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to emphasize again that even at this very critical stage of the Gulf conflict the Security Council, through its formal and informal activities, can contribute to the liberation of Kuwait by ensuring compliance by Iraq with its resolutions, through the maximum use of political and diplomatic means - which should be correctly understood by Iraq.

We strongly reject any suggestion made here yesterday and today of the manipulation or malpractices of this body. This seems, indeed, to be an attack on the dignity of a main body of the United Nations, an avatar of the past, a voice from the dark which sounded so strange in these times of change that I cannot even believe this really happened on these premises. Are we to go back to the ideological division of the world that we so much deplored in the fifties? Would it not be better to address the issue on the basis of international law and the accepted principle of the United Nations that the invasion of foreign lands and the annexation of foreign countries must be condemned? Was it not similar practices that led the founders of the United Nations to conceive of an organization able to stand up to aggression?

My delegation would like also to reiterate its great appreciation of the personal efforts and initiatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who has put his valuable experience at the service of our common endeavours. We

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commend, too, the proposals and initiatives of other countries that are working for the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and for a dignified course of action leading to the restoration of peace and legal order, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Romania for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria): As the representative of a new member, of a country that has not been a member of the Council since 1974, may I first be permitted to make a few general remarks. I shall be as brief as possible.

During Austria's first term of membership of the Security Council, in 1973 and 1974, we already experienced the heavy responsibilities of membership of the Council and, we believe, also showed our willingness to cooperate as closely as possible with all its members. The years 1973 and 1974 were times of difficult challenges to international peace and security and to the United Nations, which at that time successfully affirmed its peace-keeping responsibilities. Now Austria has again joined the Security Council at a critical time.

We welcome the newly found common basis of the five permanent members of the Security Council for exercising their shared responsibility with regard to international peace and security. We believe that this development should contribute to a strengthening of the role of law in international relations. At the same time, however, in our view this new cooperation should in no way imply reduced participation by the other members of the Security Council, which share in the decision-making responsibilities of this body. Let me assure you, Mr. President, that Austria is ready to make its contribution to the effective working of the Council in all its aspects.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Austria, for one, supports a strong role for a strong Security Council. According to Article 24, paragraph 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, however, the Security Council acts on behalf of all the Members of the United Nations. Therefore, the Council's decisions should, as much and as often as possible, be representative of the collective will of the whole international community. Only in that way will it be able to maintain its political and moral legitimacy. We believe that the Council has to be - and has to be allowed to be - just and fair in all the cases brought before it. In our view, the Council has to make every effort to uphold, and if necessary enforce, the rule of law, regardless of where and by whom a breach of law occurs.

Austria is firmly committed to the purposes and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It goes without saying that also during our second term as a member of the Council we shall faithfully carry out all our obligations under the Charter and make every effort to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In this regard, it is our firm intention to make full use of the specific possibilities of contributing to these endeavours that may be provided by Austria's status as a permanently neutral country.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

I should now like to turn to the subject under consideration today, namely the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

We are meeting here for the first time since the initiation of the use of force by States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait in pursuance of Security Council resolution 678 (1990). It is, however, important to recall that hostilities started as long ago as 2 August, when Iraq invaded Kuwait. In the words of the Federal Chancellor of Austria, Vranitzky, we, who have ourselves once been the victim of military aggression, have good reason to support the action undertaken by the international community against an aggressor. And, as Foreign Minister Mock said in the same debate, held in the Austrian Parliament on 16 January, for Austria the conclusions are clear: solidarity with those whose rights have been violated, and solidarity also with the international community, which is standing up against the violation of rights. Especially, a State the size of Austria has to be interested in international relations, which are determined less by power and more by the rule of law.

Having said that, I should hasten to add that even at this late hour, despite the military action already undertaken, political and diplomatic efforts still have their place and should, indeed, be intensified. The loss of human lives and the material destruction that have already occurred, and the even greater losses in the future in the event that hostilities continue, and especially if they escalate, make the search for ways and means of bringing these hostilities to an early end a moral imperative.

The humanitarian dimension of this conflict is of particular concern to us. Austria, and I myself as Chairman of the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990), will do the utmost to alleviate the grave situation. When we talk about human suffering, we mean the plight of the people of Kuwait and the civilian population of Iraq. We mean the disastrous consequences for all the

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people of the region, the hardship imposed on the Jordanian people, the dangers to which the Israeli people are exposed, and the lot of the Palestinians, where aspirations have been neglected. We mean the refugees and migrant workers, and we mean the prisoners of war, and even each and every soldier and their loved ones who do not know how all this will end for them.

What worries me deeply is that nobody can know where all this might end. While it is understandable that attention is being focused on dealing with the immediate situation, we must not lose sight of its long-term implications. It has been said that the Gulf conflict is a defining moment in history. The way in which we deal with, and finally resolve, this conflict will be of paradigmatic importance not only for the future of the region but also for the concept of collective security and the role of the United Nations as a whole. For Austria, the goal is clear. We seek full implementation of all Security Council resolutions beginning with resolution 660 (1990) - no more, no less.

Re-establishing peace and security in the area continues to require, first, a positive reaction by Iraq. It will then, however, also require other steps along the lines given by the Secretary-General in his statement of 15 January, and additional measures. Eventually, only a political solution will provide the necessary framework for a just and lasting settlement of the problems of the region.

I still remember Winston Churchill's words calling for magnanimity in victory and goodwill in peace. We have already seen resolution and defiance. Now we need tangible signs of compliance so that efforts may be resumed to find a political solution. Then we will need magnanimity and goodwill. Austria will not only lend its full support but also attempt to devise its own contribution, which I shall no doubt have the opportunity to present to this Council at a later stage.

Mr. AYALA-LASSO (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): Yesterday, in the course of the Security Council's public meeting held to decide on the manner in which it should meet to consider the agenda we have adopted, we had the opportunity to hear several significant ideas that clearly touched on fundamental and substantive aspects of this problem. Those ideas, which numbered no less than four, placed our treatment of this matter in a perspective that my delegation foresaw when we said we saw no reason to support the proposal to continue this meeting in private. Yesterday the Security Council indeed began the important debate in which it is now engaged.

On 2 August 1990 the conscience of mankind was shocked by an event as inexplicable as it was illogical. At a time when we were all hailing the unquestionable progress being made along the road of agreement and peaceful dialogue, at a time when the Berlin Wall had fallen, at a time when ideological confrontation seemed to be dissolving and giving way to a common desire to strengthen freedom and democracy internationally, at a time when peoples had assumed full responsibility as the makers of their own destiny, at a time in short when the cold war had come to an end and we could glimpse a new era of respect for international law, all of those expectations were suddenly thwarted with the invasion of a small State, Kuwait, by a powerful neighbour.

The most important principles of the Charter of the United Nations were violated when that invasion took place. Sovereignty, independence and the territorial integrity of a State were violated. When Iraq proclaimed the annexation of Kuwait, it sought to resist another fundamental principle of international law, namely the nullity of territorial conquests through the use of force. In addition, its action was a flagrant rejection of the commitment we have all solemnly undertaken to support peaceful solutions as the sole and exclusive means of resolving disputes.

(Mr. Ayala-Lasso, Ecuador)

The international community represented by the Security Council reacted immediately and adopted resolution 660 (1990) condemning the invasion, demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces and raising an appeal that Iraq and Kuwait inititiate negotiations to resolve their differences. Subsequent Iraqi challenges to the community of civilized nations gave rise to the immediate adoption of new Council resolutions. Thus economic sanctions were adopted against the invader. The nullity of the annexation of Kuwaiti territory was declared. It was demanded that Iraq permit and facilitate the departure of third-country nationals, and not endanger their security or health. Violations of diplomatic premises were condemned. It was demanded that the Iraqi authorities and occupation forces immediately cease and desist from taking hostage the nationals of third countries and mistreating and oppressing the nationals of Kuwait and third States and allow them to leave the area immediately. Iraq's attempt to modify the demographic composition of the Kuwaiti population was condemned.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

None of the Security Council's demands and appeals were accepted by Iraq. No positive reaction was noted in the process upon which the community of nations embarked to bring about the fulfilment of the goals set forth in Security Council resolution 660 (1990): the immediate and unconditional withdrawal by Iraq from the territory of Kuwait. On 29 November 1990 the Council adopted resolution 678 (1990) authorizing all Member States of the United Nations cooperating with Kuwait to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the region.

After the period granted to Iraq as a "pause of goodwill", the States cooperating with Kuwait, by virtue of the authorization granted under resolution 678 (1990), initiated military operations to bring about the liberation of Kuwait. It is therefore clear that all the Council's resolutions adopted in response to the war initiated by Iraq were geared towards achieving the restoration and application of the principles and rules violated by the invader, leading to the dramatic situation through which we are now living. However, it is equally clear that all resort to force has negative implications that affect and violate the most elementary rights of man and the aspirations of mankind.

Ecuador believes that even when a military action is embarked upon, the goals of which are clearly and unequivocally established and limited in resolutions of the Council, efforts aimed at adopting diplomatic and political measures to resolve the problem should continue and indeed be redoubled. The civilized conscience of mankind and all the peoples of the planet are raising their voices against the war. Diplomacy, in listening to that outcry, must use all its imagination and determination in the search for peaceful solutions.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

This is what has occurred. I need not enumerate all of the initiatives that have sought from the very beginning of the invasion of Kuwait, in various regions and various ways, to facilitate a diplomatic and peaceful solution. But I do wish to refer to the recent endeavour of the Non-Aligned Movement and to the Soviet initiative carried out by Mr. Primakov. We wish the greatest possible success to both of those initiatives. These are diplomatic measures that reiterate our universal concern and demonstrate the collective will to take action to bring about the restoration of peace.

I believe it is also desirable to stress that all proposals conducive to laying out the framework of what could be a process of pacification once the military conflict is over have a common denominator: the conviction that we must always leave a door open so that the aggressor may feel encouraged to return to the way of law. The history of human conflict teaches a constant lesson: in order to build authentic peace, we must look not only at present circumstances but also at those which will inevitably follow in the future. Despite the aggressor's obduracy, we must remain persistent in searching for a way out, which, by restoring the rule of law, will make possible a peace that will be more easily accepted and therefore more lasting.

Ecuador supports the Secretary-General in all his efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to this grave problem. We are convinced that his experience and determination and his calm dignity in the face of unjustified attacks will continue motivating him to explore ways and means to facilitate what we all seek: a rapid conclusion to the conflict and the restoration of just and lasting peace.

Latin America has not remained indifferent to events in the Gulf. The Foreign Ministers of the member States of the Rio Group recently met in Caracas to consider

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the situation. At the end of their deliberations, they published a document from which I shall read the most salient paragraphs. The Foreign Ministers:

"Agreed in reiterating their support for the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and in renewing their support for the role that must fall to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in promoting a solution to the conflict that will make possible the restoration of peace in conformity with international law, the initiation of multilateral efforts aimed at a comprehensive, peaceful and definitive settlement of the problems of the region, and the submission of a report on developments in the fulfilment of Security Council resolutions;

"Agreed in condemning the spread of the conflict through attacks upon non-belligerent countries in the area, such as Israel; they agreed on the necessity for strict compliance with the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners of war, and that the parties to the conflict should abstain from the use of chemical or biological weapons and weapons of mass or indiscriminate destruction;

"Agreed in expressing alarm at the damage to the environment occurring as a result of the conflict;

"Agreed to maintain the question of the Middle East on the agenda for their periodic consultations and to entrusting a committee made up of Colombia, Chile and Ecuador with following up on the Gulf crisis in all its aspects, including consideration of proposals and machinery to enable the Group to make an effective contribution to the advent of a new order of peace in the region based on the participation of all the parties involved and on compliance with United Nations resolutions, including solution of the problem of Palestine".

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

Ecuador, for its part, has maintained an unequivocal position on this problem. We believe that any solution must be based on strict compliance with the principles of the Charter embodied in the resolutions adopted by the Security Council. To facilitate that, all diplomatic endeavour is welcome and all peaceful initiatives should be explored. The fundamental aim of the Security Council resolutions is the liberation of Kuwait and the restoration of international peace and security in the region. Accordingly, it will be necessary in due course to consider the framework within which to seek implementation of all resolutions of the Council pertaining to the problems of the region, although implementation of the 12 Council resolutions on the Gulf problem is not conditioned upon any consideration extraneous to that specific problem.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

It is obvious that permanent peace throughout the region will lead us to examine in a broader perspective respect for and compliance with all relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the establishment of machinery to make them effective. In that context, a conference on peace in the Middle East is of special importance. Once the war is over, the Arab nation will play a prominent role in all aspects of the region's security.

I wish now to discuss humanitarian aspects of the Gulf crisis. Unfortunately, every war has its victims, and that is why war is essentially evil. These losses are irretrievable, for, as Georges Bernanos put it, every human being is immortal and irreplaceable. The peoples of the world, who demand an attempt to find a way to put an end to the hostilities, were grief-stricken by yesterday's news about the results of the air raids. We see quite clearly the different responsibilities borne by those whose violation of international law gave rise to this crisis and by those who are trying to restore the rule of law. None the less, we believe we must strengthen the world Organization's action and its humanitarian image. We believe additional measures can be taken to prevent or alleviate suffering by innocent civilian victims of the conflict. Here too Ecuador fully supports the proposals made by the Secretary-General and by international humanitarian organizations.

Let me conclude by appealing, first, to the Government of Iraq to reflect on and comply with the resolutions of the Security Council, and, secondly, to the members of the coalition supporing Kuwait to strive, without setting aside the just principles they are defending, to promote peace in the region by showing the kind of flexibility that only the defender of justice and reason can show. A great Latin American, born in Mexico, Benito Juarez, said that in relations among nations as in relations among men, peace is respect for the rights of others.

(Mr. Ayala Lasso, Ecuador)

May reason, and thus law, prevail, and may peace be restored throughout the Middle East region. That is the hope of Ecuador, and it is our solemn commitment to work in favour of this cause.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) (interpretation from French): For more than six months Iraq has occupied Kuwait; Kuwait's political independence and territorial integrity have been trampled by the Iraqi army. In recent meetings of the Security Council we have had the opportunity to become fully aware of the violations and abuses perpetrated by the occupying troops. For six months Kuwait has been the victim of looting and of the arbitrary will of an illegitimate Power. That intolerable situation has forced hundreds of thousands of inhabitants of Kuwait to flee the country, while Iraqis have been moved into Kuwait to replace them. Most of the country's commercial and economic infrastructure has been pillaged or dismantled; many cultural, medical and social institutions have been devastated.

All this suffering and destruction is rooted in Iraq's refusal to respect the most fundamental provisions of international law, its refusal to recognize the sovereignty of an independent State. If a small peaceful State can today be wiped off the map by a powerful neighbour with no reaction from the international community, few Members of the United Nations will feel safe.

Fifty years ago, similar violations of international law led to a global conflict that rocked the world. It was precisely to put a rapid end to any such threat that our Organization was founded and that it assumed the powers the Security Council has just implemented. For my country - which twice in this century has been invaded, which endured the burden of two lengthy occupations and was twice liberated by an international coalition against totalitarianism and dictatorship - the principle of the defence of Kuwait and of the need to liberate it is crucial and basic.

(Mr. Noterdaeme, Belgium)

The invasion and annexation of Kuwait aroused the entire international community to indignation and condemnation. The United Nations gave effective and clear voice to that reaction in an unprecedented mobilization of opinion. That is the context in which the Security Council has condemned Iraq on 12 occasions, first for its aggression, then for its unbending refusal to withdraw from Kuwait.

My Government understands and to a large extent shares the concerns of the countries that called for today's meeting. The daily sight of combat and its aftermath gives rise to a desire to intervene to end the hostilities. Unfortunately, one must immediately remember that the sole cause of the present war in the Gulf was the universally-condemned expansionism of the Iraqi régime and of that country's stubborn refusal to respect the will of the international community.

Since the invasion of Kuwait there have been numerous peace initiatives. They proliferated on the eve of the 15 January deadline and they continue to emerge today. We recall that all those efforts by Western countries and the Soviet Union and by Arab and non-aligned countries - not to mention by the Secretary-General - were met with blunt rejection; President Saddam Hussein obstinately rejected the peace which was, and still is, offered him.

The Security Council has adopted 12 resolutions that clearly outline the objectives and means that must guide us in restoring the full sovereignty of Kuwait.

I would recall that the resolutions aim not only at the liberation of Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate Government but also at the restoration of international peace and security in the region. The resolutions indicate the legitimate means for liberating Kuwait; never forgetting the path of diplomatic persuasion, they first imposed an embargo against Iraq before legitimizing, as a last resort, the use of force.

(Mr. Noterdaeme, Belgium)

It is in the legal framework of those resolutions that the Belgian Government views the action that has been taken and the concerns of the countries who have spoken before the Council. In that connection, Belgium stands by four principles: the objectives set by the Council's resolutions; the means legitimately implemented; the solidarity that must unite the international community; and humanitarian requirements.

(Mr. Noterdaeme, Belgium)

In numerous declarations the States that are cooperating with Kuwait within the framework of the Security Council resolutions have reaffirmed their determination to abide by the objectives set forth therein. The military means being used by the coalition forces are clearly impressive. However, that force of arms can only be judged in comparison with the unbelievable apparatus set up by Iraq in its attempt to perpetuate its presence in Kuwait.

For us, respect for the objectives of the Organization in the Gulf conflict implies two fundamental considerations. First of all, only a clear commitment by Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, followed by concrete actions leading to complete respect for the Council's resolutions, could result in a suspension of hostilities. It is also essential that we not neglect the second objective set forth in resolution 678 (1990), namely, the conditions that would allow for the effective and lasting restoration of international peace and security in the region. My Government believes that after the liberation of Kuwait the Security Council must play a pivotal role in realizing that goal. Within that context Belgium, which is one of the States members of the European Community, repeats its commitment to work actively to ensure a future of peace, stability and development, with social justice and regional economic solidarity for all the peoples of the region. To that end it will support the setting up of a conference on security and co-operation in the Middle East. The goal of such an undertaking would be the progressive reduction of the misunderstandings and bitterness that continue to prevail in that region by giving pride of place, first, to problems of reconstruction and economic co-operation and then to those of security and respect for human rights. That system would complement the efforts undertaken to promote a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In that connection Belgium renews the commitment it has made to developing a process designed to lead, at an appropriate

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time and after serious preparation, to a settlement of the Palestinian problem. Here, my Government welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to appoint in the very near future a new special representative who could begin the preparations for such a process.

To achieve those objectives we should use all the means the resolutions have made available to us. Here, I should like to deal specifically with the proposals put forward by the countries that have requested this meeting. The Belgian Government wishes to make two comments in this regard. First, the use of force, which became inevitable given the attitude of Iraq, should not put a halt to diplomacy. As the Secretary-General emphasized last week, all diplomatic initiatives should be supported that would promote the liberation of Kuwait and, therefore, the end of hostilities.

On the other hand, however, diplomatic efforts unfortunately can no longer exclude at this stage the other means that have been brought into play to ensure respect for international law. A cessation of military operations would be interpreted by the Government of Iraq as a sign of weakness on the part of the international community, and that Government would use it to bolster new arguments to justify its contempt for the Council's resolutions and take it as evidence of an illustory tactical advantage in the field. It is therefore likely that any kind of truce would have an effect contrary to the one hoped for and that it would ultimately serve to prolong hostilities rather than to cut them short.

Only a new element would allow the Council usefully to consider the interruption of hostilities. We all know what that element should be: Iraq's unequivocal commitment to withdraw from Kuwait, to be followed immediately by concrete actions providing a convincing illustration of Iraq's intention to abide by all of the Council's resolutions.

(Mr. Noterdaeme, Belgium)

We ardently hope to see such a commitment from Iraq that would enable us to put a speedy end to the war and to the sufferings it is causing.

The resolutions adopted by the Security Council are binding on all States. That clear principle of law has two consequences: on the one hand, all States must scrupulously implement the embargo. That is an obligation under Charter VII of the Charter and not the result of a choice allowing for certain differences of interpretation. My Government welcomes the fact that the embargo has effectively been implemented by Members of the Organization. Moreover, Belgium has actively assisted in naval control of the embargo by dispatching four warships to the region. At the present time those ships have engaged in more than 2,500 searches at sea. However, we must note that even the nearly total application of the embargo has not led Iraq to abandon its conquest.

Beyond the embargo, we have all been urged to show solidarity with States co-operating in the liberation of Kuwait. Such co-operation has reflected the means, responsibilities and geopolitical situations of the various States. Indeed, the resolutions leave it up to the States freely to determine the magnitude of their commitment. As for my country, we believe we have contributed to the collective effort through military support and by means of considerable medical assistance.

I should like to conclude with a fourth consideration concerning the humanitarian aspects of the present conflict, to which the Secretary-General referred in a timely matter last week during an informal meeting of the Council. Belgium shares the concerns voiced in this Chamber regarding the suffering of Kuwaiti and Iraqi civilians, a suffering caused by the Baghdad regime's refusal to respect international law.

My Government wishes to emphasize three things in this connection: First, we are convinced that the States that are co-operating with Kuwait are doing all in

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their power to enforce respect for humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions, both concerning the protection of civilians and concerning the treatment of prisoners of war. On the other hand, Iraq's behaviour gives rise to extreme concern. The sufferings inflicted upon Kuwait, the attacks deliberately aimed at civilians in Saudi Arabia and Israel, the fate of prisoners of war, not to mention the treatment meted out to the Kurdish population, the assaults on the environment and appeals to terrorism, are all violations of law and condemned by my country's authorities.

Secondly, my Government will lend its assistance to any efforts designed to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in Iraq and in Kuwait, in particular through the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, organizations to which I should like to pay a tribute for the active roles they are playing. In no case can such assistance be held hostage to the benefit of considerations that are totally foreign to humanitarian aid. In order to avoid that situation my country hopes that, in accordance with resolution 666 (1990), the Committee on Sanctions will be able to meet without delay to make an objective assessment of the essential needs of the civilian populations, particularly of the most vulnerable sectors. That consideration will give us an idea of whether circumstances are likely to justify the inclusion of emergency food assistance to Iraq and Kuwait as part of humanitarian assistance. Such a decision would obviously entail the Iraqi Government's acceptance of effective control to guarantee the destination of supplies sent, as explicitly provided in the Geneva Conventions.

In order to demonstrate its full solidarity in the humanitarian sphere, my country has approved plans for considerable assistance to cope with the needs of thousands of refugees. Our financial assistance is also being addressed to the countries most affected by the economic consequences of the conflict, in particular Turkey, Egypt and Jordan.

(Mr. Noterdaeme, Belgium)

Those are the considerations that motivate my Government in dealing with this conflict.

In order to right a flagrant violation of international law the Security Council has had to authorize the use of force, with all the consequences that that entails. Events that have taken place since then have confirmed that that decision was, unfortunately, the only one possible. They have strengthened our feeling that a policy of appeasement would only have provided the international community with a respite and would have forced it to confront later, in an even more dangerous context, the challenge facing it.

That being the case, any diplomatic effort with a serious chance of sucess deserves to be encouraged. The most important thing remains the evacuation of Kuwait. Only with such a withdrawal can the guns fall silent. It is now up to one single man to decide to do so.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): From the first moment of the outbreak at the beginning of August 1990 of the crisis in the Gulf region, resulting from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Soviet Union took a strong position of principle, of firm condemnation of the aggression by Iraq against Kuwait and its consequent annexation, as a flagrant violation of the norms of international law, morality and civilized inter-State relations. Together with other members of the international community, the Soviet Union immediately took the side of the victim of aggression and energetically spoke out in favour of the unconditional, immediate and full withdrawal of Iraqi troops from the territory of Kuwait, the restoration of the independence and sovereignty of that State and the restoration of international legality and justice.

At all stages of the conflict the Security Council has done everything in its power to ensure a peaceful solution - I emphasize "peaceful". The Council has adopted 12 resolutions aimed at settling the Kuwait crisis through political and other non-military means.

The President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, in his statement of 9 February once again reaffirmed the fundamental fidelity of the Soviet Union to Security Council resolutions, which reflect the will of the international community and the hope of peoples for a new world order excluding aggression and encroachment on the territory and natural resources of others.

Unfortunately, Iraq's rigid intransigence provoked the present tragic course of events. The world found itself faced with a most dangerous armed confrontation, whose alarming reverberations go far beyond the boundaries of the Middle East.

The course of events in the war in the Gulf region is a source of great concern in the Soviet Union. Particularly alarming, and a matter of great regret in our country, are the reports being received of civilian victims.

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Military actions have already caused enormous material damage. Entire countries - first Kuwait, now Iraq and later, perhaps, others as well - are threatened by catastrophic destruction. The dumping of enormous quantities of oil into the Gulf may turn into a drastic ecological disaster.

The Soviet Union has noted the statements made by countries parties to the coalition to the effect that the military operations they are carrying out are limited to the objective laid down in resolutions of the Security Council - namely, the liberation of Kuwait. At the same time, we cannot fail to take into account the fact that a further escalation of the conflict may create a danger exceeding the mandate of the Council's resolutions.

Extremely dangerous developments are seen in the acts of provocation attempting to expand the boundaries of the war to involve Israel and other States and in so doing to give the armed conflict yet another destructive dimension - the Arab-Israeli dimension. There is a growing danger of the use of weapons of mass destruction, above all chemical and bacteriological weapons. The possibility of such a development cannot but be of concern to the Soviet Union, particularly in view of the region's proximity to our southern borders.

As is well known, the Soviet Union has made considerable efforts to prevent the situation in the region from sliding towards armed confrontation. The President of the Soviet Union and the Soviet leadership have on many occasions appealed to the Iraqi leadership, trying to persuade it to show prudence and to carry out the resolutions of the Security Council. We are continuing to engage in contacts with all those who are in a position to promote a settlement of the conflict.

Throughout the entire one-and-a-half-month-long pause of goodwill, and even after the beginning of military operations in accordance with resolution 678 (1990), we appealed to President Saddam Hussein not to make irremediable

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mistakes, to show a love of peace and to declare the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Unfortunately, the answers of the Iraqi side to our appeals were unfailingly negative.

In favouring the speedy cessation of hostilities and the start of a search for a political settlement, the Soviet Union is fully aware that without a clearly expressed readiness by the Iraqi leadership to carry out the demands of the international community and to leave Kuwait this cannot be achieved.

The Soviet-American statement of 29 January emphasizes that

"a cessation of hostilities would be possible if Iraq would make an unequivocal commitment to withdraw from Kuwait. ... such a commitment must be backed by immediate concrete steps leading to full compliance with the Security Council resolutions."

Motivated by a sense of historic responsibility and by humanitarian considerations, and trying to work in all possible ways for a settlement on the basis of the Security Council resolutions, the President of the Soviet Union at this critical time recently publicly appealed once again to the President of Iraq to weigh everything that is at stake for his country and to demonstrate realism, which would make it possible to embark on the path of a reliable and just peaceful settlement.

In this connection, on 9 February President Gorbachev decided to send his personal representative to Baghdad for a meeting with President Hussein. That meeting took place on 12 February. In acting in this way the Soviet Union wishes, together with Arab and other Muslim States, the countries of Europe and Asia, and above all the United States of America and all the other permanent members of the Security Council, not only to assist in bringing about a speedy end to the war, but also to begin preparations for a lasting system of security on an equal footing in a region which is so important to the whole world. That includes, of course, a

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settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem, given the decisive role played in this process by those States which are located in the region.

A worthy role in the post-war system must also be played by Iraq, whose people cannot be held responsible for what has happened. We believe that the Security Council must begin that work - preparation for a lasting system of security on an equal footing in the region under discussion - in the very near future.

But the most important thing here today is to extinguish the flames of war in the Gulf as quickly as possible. We believe that the entire international community and all States must actively exert their influence on the Iraqi leadership to force it to change its mind. That is precisely the aim of the continuation of Soviet-Iraqi contacts now taking place in Moscow.

In our view, the present discussion in the Security Council must serve as a clear reaffirmation of the need for the speedy implementation of the resolutions adopted so far by the Security Council, resolutions which have recently been subjected to attacks by Iraq.

Our meeting here is a clear signal to the Iraqi leadership that it must comply with these just and well-founded decisions of the Security Council and in the interests of its people and of peace in the region declare an immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

In this connection, I have only one question for the representative of Iraq: When shall we hear such a statement from the Iraqi leadership?

The PRESIDENT: There are a number of names remaining on the list of speakers. With the concurrence of members of the Council, I shall suspend the meeting now until 10.30 tomorrow morning.

The meeting was suspended at 7.50 p.m.